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has been left to direct you, greet him, or whoever else it is, most humbly for me. I am with all my heart in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sisters, your most obedient sister and servant.

L.232B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[December 1648]

Monsieur,

We are truly having difficulty finding someone to send to the Assembly at the home of the Duchess d'Aiguillon. We can only instruct someone to deliver our papers directly to her. Since I believe everyone else's interest is similar to ours, I thought that perhaps my son could attend and do as the others. However, Monsieur, your Charity might prefer us to give our papers to the one who will be representing you at the Assembly. We will await the order that it will please you to give us, and we will beg God to give you perfect health for His glory. I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and most grateful daughter and servant.

1649

Intensification of the Fronde, the civil war pitting the supporters of Mazarin (the foreigner) and the Queen against a portion of the people and the French aristocracy.

January 14: *Monsieur Vincent's unsuccessful attempt to see Mazarin. Departure of Monsieur Vincent for the West of France; visits to the houses at Fréneville, Angers, Nantes and Richelieu.*

June 13: *Return of Monsieur Vincent to Paris.*

L.235 - TO OUR VERY DEAR SISTERS BRIGIDE AND MARIE¹

Daughters of Charity at Chantilly

New Years Day, 1649

My very dear Sister,

Everything that you requested has been packed for some time, with

1. Claude Brigide and Marie Prévost.

the exception of the soup pot since we did not know the size you would need. We will purchase it as soon as possible and will send everything at the first opportunity.

I am quite surprised by the number of your patients. I ask that you carry the cooked dinner only in the area of your residence and for the rest, follow the orders given.

You delay too long sending us news. I am well aware that you are only there on loan, so make sure that you do not take on any new work and that you leave behind a great example of virtue. I ask the same of Sister Marie and beg both of you, in the name of God, to think of the fidelity you owe to Him and to the Company to which, in His goodness, He has called you.

My dear Sisters, death comes so quickly that it seems to me that we should always be mindful of the time when it will be our turn to die. In this way we will make good use of our remaining days by living according to the holy will of God. Two weeks ago He called Sister Renée of Angers¹ and the older Sister Jeanne-Baptiste.² Now Sister Antoinette³ is quite ill; so too is the younger Sister Jeanne-Baptiste,⁴ although thanks be to God, she is better. Sister Jeanne Fouré⁵ in Valpuiseaux is also ill.

So, my dear Sisters, we must continually pray for our entire Company so that each of us will die well. I also ask this of you personally since I am in great need of your prayers, and I am in the love of Jesus, born and crucified for us, your very humble sister and servant.

L.233 - TO OUR VERY DEAR SISTERS BRIGIDE AND MARIE⁶

Daughters of Charity at Chantilly

(January 1649)

My very dear Sisters,

Here is a part of what you requested because we do not know what you need in the way of a soup pot. We do not know the size or whether

1. Renée returned from Angers with Élisabeth Turgis in 1640.

2. Jeanne-Baptiste, the elder, see Letter 64.

3. Antoinette Labille, see Letter 52.

4. Jeanne-Baptiste, the younger, had, no doubt, just arrived. After the parish of Saint-Jean-de-la-Grève, she went to Montmirail. In 1658, while at the Hospice of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus, she suddenly left the Company.

5. Jeanne Fouré, see Letter 173b.

6. Claude Brigide and Marie Prévost. This letter was written by Élisabeth Hellot.

it should be made of iron or copper. When you let us know, we will buy one with a ladle to go with it.

There is no rhubarb in Paris, but here are some potent pills for diarrhea with instructions for their use. We are also sending some violart oil, some oil of roses and some excellent oil that you can use instead of Saint-John's wort. Along with these are a basin, a cushion and a dinner tray with two pairs of gloves for carrying the soup pot. I am sure that you are aware, my dear Sisters, that these gloves are not to be worn to church or in the village unless you are distributing the soup. Remember also that all these items are the property of the house, and if either one of you is called back before they are worn out, they must be left there for your replacements.

We told our sisters at Liancourt to find out whether you might have some of our deceased Sister Turgis¹ clothing that they can use. For that reason, when they come, do not hesitate to give them what they need. However, please do not disturb Sister's little box. I believe you were careful to lock up her rosaries, book of hours, papers and other belongings which you know are kept when a sister dies so that they can be sent with her box to the Motherhouse as soon as possible.

All our sisters are reasonably well, thank God, and send you their greetings. I ask our good God to give you the perfection of His holy love in which I am, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and loving servant.

L.237 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

at Angers

February 5, 1649

Monsieur,

I have refrained from allowing myself the honor of writing to you for a while because I was not certain that you were at Angers. Then I was held up by the business of which you are aware. I hope that you will receive this letter as a testimony of the gratitude I owe you.

You have been notified that Monsieur Vincent² is supposed to be in Angers. The Visitation nuns can confirm this for you. I beg you, Monsieur, to take the trouble to find out about this so that our sisters will not be deprived of the happiness of seeing him, although I believe

1. Élisabeth Turgis died in October.

2. Monsieur Vincent was on a visit to the West of France.

that in his great charity he would not fail to go to see them unless he was in a great hurry.

It seems to me that, in the last letter that I had the honor of receiving from you, your Charity notified me that our sisters there no longer needed the ninth sister we sent them. It has been so long that I no longer remember. If that is indeed the case, Monsieur, I beg you to take the trouble to write to Monsieur des Jonchères and find out if we could send her to the Hôtel-Dieu of Nantes where they need another sister. They have only seven there, and it has been quite a while since they have asked for another. However, because of the difficulty of sending a sister alone, we have always put this off. If Monsieur Vincent is in Angers, please make it a point to speak to him about it. Whichever sister is to be sent, she must be capable of giving good service. We thought of suggesting Sister Nicole¹ or Sister Élisabeth² because you know the kind of people we have to satisfy in Nantes.

We are still in possession of the holy relic³ we acquired with all the formalities you required. I sincerely hope that the goodness of God gives us the means to send it to you so that it may be placed where God wishes it to be honored.

You know the need we have of your prayers. I request them for the love of God in which I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and humble servant.

L.238 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

March 16 (1649)

Monsieur,

I was anxiously waiting for the post roads to open so that I might have the honor of thanking you most humbly for the trouble that your Charity continues to take for our poor sisters. I am truly astonished that they are so prone to worry. Possibly, Monsieur, they are not capable of too much mental exercise, or of discussing their problems among themselves without becoming upset even though they are only trifling

1. Nicole, perhaps Nicole Georget, arrived in Angers in June 1647 and was in Nanteuil in 1659.
2. Élisabeth Brocard, arrived in Angers at the end of 1648 with Claude Chantereau, Perrette and Barbe, a native of Troyes. In 1654, she became Cécile Angiboust's assistant. Difficulties came to light quickly between them. Élisabeth, called back to Paris in August 1655, was sent to La Fère in 1656.
3. The relic of Saint Maurice, see Letter 265.

matters. I humbly beg you, Monsieur, to make a point of discussing this with Monsieur Vincent, who, I do not believe, will fail to go to Angers, if he is not already there, because he was in Le Mans not long ago.

Here, we are most anxious that his return not be delayed too long. We hope for this by the grace of God in whose love I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and humble daughter.

L.240 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

at Angers

March 31 (1649)

Monsieur,

I owe you a great deal for the trouble that your Charity took to send us the news that we were so anxious to receive; but we will continue to worry until we hear from the person himself that the accident,¹ which God permitted, has not caused him any great harm. This leads me to beg you very humbly to show us this same kindness again for the love of God.

Here we hope for peace, although there are people with such badly conceived notions that they seem to reject it openly. Everything must be left up to God. For myself, Monsieur, I wish for peace with all my heart for ourselves and for everyone, and I pray that the teachings of Jesus Christ may reign supreme.

It is in His most holy love that I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and humble daughter and servant.

P.S. I am not writing to our sisters at this time for I believe that they are receiving sufficient consolation. I thank you most humbly, Monsieur, for all the trouble your Charity has the kindness to go to for them.

1. Monsieur Vincent had an accident going to Angers from Le Mans. Near Durtal, his horse fell into a small river. Monsieur Vincent would have drowned without the swift rescue by the priest who accompanied him. He dried off in a poor farmer's cottage.

**L.234 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER GENEVIÈVE¹ AND THE OTHER
DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY**

Serving the Poor Children at the Château of Bicêtre

Friday (c. March-April 1649)

My very dear Sisters,

Let us give God the glory which we owe Him in the state in which He has placed us. I beg Him with all my heart to let you know how good it is to trust in Him. Therefore, my dear Sisters, look to Him often as children do to their father and mother for their needs. I am sure that He gives all of you the courage to die rather than to offend Him and that your modesty will clearly show that you belong to the King of Kings to whom all powers are subject.

You would do well to keep our sisters together and to take great care to watch over the older girls or to keep them in the school² even when they are not helping you. Courage, my dear Sisters! Who should have more of it than you who are suffering in the exercise of charity?

Oh! that Our Lord may take great pleasure in seeing the sentiments of love in your hearts and your submission to His holy will which accepts all that He desires in you and of you. I have no doubt that each of you has thought about making a good confession with all the necessary resolutions, but especially of being faithful servants in the future and of practicing self-denial more than ever.

I beg the Blessed Virgin to be your protectress and to obtain for you from her Son the generosity you need. I also beg your guardian angels to be in accord with the angels of the gentlemen sent to you by God so that they may be helped to live in a manner which will glorify God eternally, and you, my dear Sisters, will continue all your holy efforts for His holy love in which I am, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister.

P.S. Although I speak to you of going to confession, I do not want to cause you to be afraid of death. Certainly not! I do this because it helps you to remain in the grace of God, so that He may always watch over you.

I truly would like to be with you. We are going to do all we can to be at peace.

1. Geneviève Poisson, see Letter 28.

2. During the troubles of La Fronde, the army camped around Bicêtre.

L.241 - FOR SISTER JULIENNE (LORET)

(April 1649)

My very dear Sister,

Grégoire left to complete his trip. Find out what you can from his mother. You can approach her at home or in the places she frequents. She must at least name her midwife or her confessor as assurance that she will not expose her child again.

I beg Sister Françoise¹ to show great charity to our poor sick sister² with whom I suffer. Spare nothing to alleviate her suffering.

I praise God that we have disposed of the house.

If Monsieur Saint-Médard's daughter comes by to find out the date she will enter our Company, ask her to wait until I return.

Please send us four holy cards for our sisters at Maule and Crespières and give all our sisters Monsieur Vincent's greetings. He is well, thank God. We must constantly pray for his preservation so that God will be pleased to send him back to us soon. His letters are dated Easter Monday.³ Please send this letter and those of Monsieur Vincent to Madame de Bouillon⁴ as soon as you receive them.

I think it would be well for you to send Sister Perrette⁵ to Issy for another visit and, as soon as I return, both will go to live there. Send her to Madame de Montdésir⁶ to find out how she is and whether some money is due. If she has not requested any, tell her to do so. Do not let her know that you keep a portion of the money for their food until we have discussed it together as we should.

Remember me to all our sisters. I did not think that I would be here for so long. However, they may be certain that a part of me is always with them, as with you, of whom I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

1. Françoise Le Roseau, the cook, see Letter 258.

2. Laurence Dubois, a young sister, see Letter 419.

3. Monday, April 4, 1649.

4. Madame de Bouillon, see Letter 67.

5. Perrette, the elder, see Letter 214.

6. Madame de Montdésir, Lady of Charity of Issy. The withdrawal of the Daughters of Charity from this village would take place in the year 1649.

**L.242 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT, GENERAL OF THE PRIESTS
OF THE MISSION**

April 6, 1649

My Most Honored Father,

We are most anxious to know how and where you are. I beg God, in His goodness, that your health and Community business will allow you to come soon. The charitable undertakings here in Paris need you badly. Madame de Lamoignon,¹ the President, in particular implores you to return soon. I will let others tell you the news of peace. I only know that it inspires us to praise God with the people.

Good Monsieur Alain² passed away. Our sisters are getting ready to return to Bicêtre³ one of these days to occupy the place permanently and sow the fields. God willing, they can live there as long as Divine Providence ordains.

Madame du Sault,⁴ the President, sends her very humble greetings. She really hopes that you will be here before she leaves to return home.

I most humbly beg you, my Most Honored Father, not to forget our poor sisters if you are near Nantes. I also ask you if there is a way they can avoid changing sisters. As I told you in two preceding letters, if your Charity feels it necessary at least that Sister Marie⁵ of Tours be changed, have her sent back to Tours rather than to Paris. We have tried her in several locations, and when she was sent to Nantes, I told her it would be our last attempt to place her. Please do as your Charity sees fit, according to the wishes of Our Lord who inspires you.

In the name of God, my dear Father, pray for us. I have written to you and made known our needs and mine in particular. However, I truly fear that you did not receive our letters. We only hope that God will show us His mercy and restore to us what was taken away by His justice. I am in His most holy love, Most Honored Father, your most obedient and grateful daughter and servant.

1. Madame de Lamoignon, see Letter 77.

2. Monsieur Jean Alain, Priest of the Mission, 31 years of age.

3. During the siege of Paris by the troops of Condé, the foundlings and the sisters returned to the center of the city (Coste III, 428).

4. Lady of Charity.

5. Marie Thilouse, see Letter 161. Monsieur Vincent would be in Nantes at the end of the month of April.

L.243 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

at Angers

April 6, 1649

Monsieur,

I have the honor of writing to you to ask you to give us any news of Monsieur Vincent that you might know. We are extremely worried because we have not heard anything since March 14 when he was in Le Mans. I know that he was also in Angers, but since then we have heard nothing of any sort. The last news we did receive came neither from him nor from anyone close to him. Please, Monsieur, make an effort to let us know what you know about this. I am waiting for news from our sisters before I write to them.

I beg God to preserve you, and I am in His most holy love, Monsieur, your most obedient and humble daughter and servant.

L.244 - TO SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Nantes

April 6 (1649)

My very dear Sisters,

May God be blessed and eternally glorified for all the graces He bestows on His creatures, especially the graces bestowed on our little Company in general and on each of its members in particular during these times of affliction. Share with us, my dear Sister, our joy in knowing that our sisters are safe and that they never stopped serving the sick poor. In Paris you would not believe the amount of alms given to the poor who had no bread. I believe that this has drawn down God's mercy upon us so that we might have peace.

Thank God for us, my dear Sisters, as we do for the strength and courage He gave you to bear with everything about which you told me. I rejoiced at the joy you expressed upon receiving news of us and at the good use you made of everything God let you know about us.

We knew that Monsieur Vincent was in Angers. God willing, he is with you now and you have time to speak to him. Let Divine Providence lead you in this and in all matters.

I am in such a hurry that I only have time to finish and to assure you

that I am in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Please extend our greetings to Monsieur des Jonchères and to all our friends.

L.245 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE¹

(April 1649)

My dear Sister,

What Divine Providence has ordained for Sister Jacqueline is very good. However, there is no hurry in carrying out the resolution that was made. Nevertheless, we must be firm and not limit our consideration only to the oral declarations of the girls wishing to remain in the Company. Their physical health and contrary actions, shown on numerous occasions in a variety of circumstances, must also be considered. We must believe that God gives His Spirit to superiors so that they may lead their families. However, when I return at the beginning of next week, we must examine the situation.

May God be praised that Sister Marie is in a better frame of mind. You did not let me know if you had the belongings of our sisters from Issy² sent to Saint-Lazare. Nor did you inform me of our sisters working with the foundlings, although Monsieur Berthe³ did tell us about them. An inflamed chin has restricted me somewhat to my room. I hope it will soon be better.

I beg you to recommend Monsieur Vincent to the prayers of your sisters. He asks for prayers in each of the letters his Charity does me the honor of writing to me, and he assures us that we are remembered at the holy altar. I fear that he was not well in Saint-Méen⁴ and that this is delaying his trip. This would be a great affliction for us.

I beg you, my Sister, to begin a novena to Our Lord who was a traveler on earth and to the Blessed Virgin, our true and only mother. I am in their love, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

1. Julienne Loret at the Motherhouse. Louise de Marillac was in Paris.

2. The sisters left Issy.

3. Monsieur Berthe (1622-1697) from Donchéry in the Ardennes entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1640. In 1646, he was in Sedan. In 1649, he was named Superior of the Collège des Bons-Enfants. He left for Rome in 1651 and stayed there until 1655. In 1661, he was named Assistant General.

4. Monsieur Vincent was in Saint-Méen on April 5, 1649.

L.261 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTERS JULIENNE AND HELLOT¹

Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor (at Paris)

(April 1649)

My very dear Sisters,

I find both of you a bit lazy for sending me messages without writing to me and for not giving me news of the House. Perhaps you are unaware that it pleases me for you to think that writing to me is necessary; besides, you would make me most happy. My dear Sisters, it is not that I do not find great consolation in the blessing which God gives to your actions and that I do not thank Him for it with all my heart, but it is good for us to exhibit the virtues of submission and dependence.

I truly believe that the Company² is quite regular and that each sister is fulfilling her duties and allowing the others to fulfill theirs according to the usual customs and the necessities of the moment, the duration of which we have no idea. Nor do we know if this will last longer than we expect—something I pray God will not permit because the poor people need all of this to end.

As for myself, I am well, thank God, but I have not felt the war so much as I have since I have been in town. I was thinking of returning today, but yesterday I was waiting for the good dinner I missed because Sister Hellot has extolled the benefits of fasting at Madame de Mortemart's³ home. As a result Sister Barbe⁴ nearly challenged to a duel⁵ those who were offended by the idea! I do not know how I merited it, but the same thing happened today at Madame de Marillac's home! However, neither one of them prevented me from eating heartily.

I beg you to find out tomorrow about Monsieur Lambert⁶ and to let me know; he was bled twice. I praise God that Sister Laurence⁷ is better. I beg you to let her know that I am often with her in spirit and that with her I offer her sufferings to Our Lord for the needs of our country.

My dear Sister, please notify Monsieur Lambert or Monsieur du Chesne⁸ when our sisters from the city, even if there is only one, wish to

1. Julianne Loret and Élisabeth Hellot. Louise de Marillac visited the houses of the Daughters of Charity in Paris.
2. The Company of the Daughters of Charity.
3. Madame de Mortemart, see Letter 206, a relative of Louise de Marillac.
4. Barbe Bailly, who accompanied Louise de Marillac.
5. "Appeler sur le pré": phrase used to challenge someone to a duel. Louise de Marillac cheerfully joked about no one offering them dinner.
6. Monsieur Lambert, see Letter 18.
7. Laurence Dubois, see Letter 419.
8. Monsieur du Chesne, see Letter 154.

go to confession. I truly believe that in their charity they will take the trouble to come to the House.

I thought Sister Françoise¹ was supposed to come. I ask that she come tomorrow morning because I am afraid a meeting will come up which will necessitate my going out. Everyone is so busy that of all those I was supposed to see, I have only met with Madame de Lamoignon, the President.

I consider you very fortunate to be away from the great disturbance we had here yesterday. I was never so dependent nor detached from my will as I am now. I praise God for this with all my heart and find consolation in the thought of being reunited with my sisters. I greet them all warmly, and earnestly desire their perfection and holiness; and I am in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. I beg you not to let the pigs out together so much. Especially do not let them go into the garden so that we may see it growing. I hope you are making sure that the cow and the other animals are not overfed. This is harmful to them rather than . . .

(The end of the sentence is not finished.)

L.259 - (TO SISTER JULIENNE LORET)²

(April 1649)

My very dear Sister,

You have reason to complain that I have not written to you. I meant to do so but have not had the time. Then I thought that any day I would be returning to all our dear sisters, where I often wish to be. However, I must wait for God to will it.

I think it would be better, my dear Sister, to wait for our return since Sister Louise³ has not returned to her duties. Please take care of her because I hear that she is not well.

If some wheat or flour comes your way at a good price, you may buy some. However, if it is expensive, it would be better to wait.

I do not know if Sister Françoise⁴ remembered to tell you to send the cow, even if it is expensive, because I am afraid that she will dry up.

1. Françoise Le Roseau, see Letter 258.

2. An unaddressed letter, Louise de Marillac wrote from Paris to Julianne Loret at the Motherhouse, see preceding letters.

3. Louise-Christine Rideau, see Letter 149.

4. Françoise Fanchon, see Letter 595.

I hope that our sister gardeners are hard at work while God is giving us beautiful weather. I would ask them to take special care of the chicory. I am sending you a few nice beans so that, as they are gathered in, you might remember the war. I beg you to tell Sister Françoise that I believe the essence of cinnamon must be placed in the sun like the other distilled waters.

I beg you, my dear Sister, to continue praying to God for peace, and ask our sisters to thank Him for keeping Monsieur Vincent well. Good evening, my dear Sisters. I am entirely yours in the love of Jesus Crucified.

L.258 - TO OUR DEAR SISTERS AT SAINT-GERMAIN-L'AUXERROIS¹

To be given to Sister Julienne, Daughter of Charity across from Saint-Lazare

(April 1649)

My very dear Sister,

I beg you to give me news of yourself tomorrow; I will return only at the end of the week. We are well, thanks be to God. Send me news of Monsieur Norais and of all our family. I am so rushed that I only have time to assure you that I am in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. I ask with all my heart to be remembered to Sister Hellot, Sister Françoise Lerose² and all our sisters, but especially to Sisters Barbe³ and Geneviève.⁴

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1. Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, one of the parishes of Paris. Louise visited there during her stay in Paris.
 2. Louise de Marillac wrote "Lerose" but it was a question of Françoise Le Roseau, the cook. She did not know how to read or write and signed an "x" on the Act of Establishment of the Company in August 1655.
 3. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43.
 4. Geneviève Doinel, see Letter 352.

L.132 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Liancourt

Tuesday (c. May 1649)

My very dear Sister,

I praise God with all my heart for your safe trip.¹ You have reason to thank Our Lord for His guidance. I beg you to console Sister Marguerite of Fisme² in her afflictions and in her complaints against Sisters Louise³ and Clémence.⁴ I would ask her especially to consider that we are not perfect, and that God sometimes permits us to commit many faults in order to humble us. Otherwise, we would be damned by the mortal sin of pride.

God willing, we will send the carriage Thursday at the latest. Please make the trip back in two days so that it will not be too much for our dear, weak sister whom I greet very lovingly. I hope that her return will be good for her health. Greet for me as well my dear Sister Madeleine and our other sisters. Please tell Sister Clémence that we are greatly consoled to hear news of her, and that I urge her to be patient for a little while as she waits to come here. She will lose nothing, because she will have the opportunity to practice great charity, gentleness and condescension toward our poor, dear sick sister whom we shall send for, with God's help, as soon as Our Lord sees fit. Although travel expenses are not paid by the hospital, it is just that they should defray those of persons not in your party. I am sure that you will do all that is necessary to comfort the patient. Bid your final farewell to the Pastor in the same manner in which you greeted him when you arrived, and assure all our sisters of our affection. Please believe me to be in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

1. Louise de Marillac sent Barbe Angiboust to visit Marguerite, who was ill.

2. Marguerite, a native of Fisme, died in August 1649.

3. Louise Proust, see Letter 130c.

4. Clémence Ferré, see Letter 34.

L.246 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at the Hospital
of Saint-René, Nantes*

May 5 (1649)

My very dear Sister,

I knew that you had had the blessing of seeing Monsieur Vincent,¹ and I praise God for it with all my heart. At the same time I hope that all our sisters are making good use of this grace.

I believe, Sister, that some changes among our sisters are necessary, and I would ask you to let me know as soon as possible if you could train a sister who already knows how to prepare medicines and other remedies² to mix compounds. It would be difficult for us to send you someone already skilled in this on short notice. Please do not mention this suggestion to anyone.

Please let me know if there are only seven sisters there, and in the name of God, do your best to take care of the goods of the poor. Also, see to it that our sisters are doing this lovingly. I believe that you are as exact as possible in keeping track of your receipts and expenditures.

Please greet warmly for me all our good gentlemen and Ladies and our sisters whom I embrace warmly and lovingly in the love of our crucified and risen Master. Your very humble sister and loving servant.

L.247 - TO MONSIEUR PORTAIL

at Marseilles

Paris, May 16, 1649

Monsieur,

I know that your heart filled with charity will accept the humble thanks of both our sisters and me for the holy admonitions and testimonies of good will which you gave us in a general letter to the sisters and in a personal letter to me. They were a great joy and consolation to us. Your letter was read while we were waiting for the conference, and God knows,

1. Monsieur Vincent passed through Nantes at the end of April.
2. Louise de Marillac contemplated the departure of Henriette Gesseume, who had been in charge of the pharmacy since 1646. Monsieur Vincent realized that she was the cause of most of the difficulties in the community as well as at the hospital in Nantes (Coste III, 432).

Monsieur, that tears were shed. It was the hope of seeing you soon which comforted us, although we have awaited this happiness for a long time! I beg you in the name of God, Monsieur, not to contribute to this delay so that when it pleases Divine Providence to show us mercy, we will have this happiness.

I am sure that in your charity you have suffered with us during this period of turmoil in Paris.¹ We beg you to help us to thank God for the graces He has given to the entire Company. He preserved us from hunger and all other dangers, both in the cities and in the villages. We have such a debt of gratitude that we can never repay it unless our good God adds to all His other graces that of being more faithful than we have been. This leads me to implore the aid of your charity because we hope for powerful assistance from you if Divine Providence leads you back to this area. You will find great changes here.

I do not know if you knew of the deaths of our dear Sisters Turgis,² the older Jeanne-Baptiste,³ Salomé,⁴ Renée from Angers,⁵ Marie Despinal,⁶ Élisabeth Martin,⁷ who was at Nantes, and of our good Sister Madeleine⁸ who had been Sister Servant for so long, as well as of several others who entered our Company during your absence. I recommend all of them to your charity, but especially those still with us—several of whom are wavering in their vocation. Please pray also for all of us in general because we are not zealous or fervent enough and are much too affected by self-love. This makes me fear that we will soon become lax.

What do you think, Monsieur, of the fact that I am not afraid to trouble you with this sad news? It is the trust I have in the charity that God has given you for our well-being that prompts me, and the perfection that His goodness wishes in us, for which I beg you to pray. I beg you to do me the honor always of believing me in the love of Jesus Crucified, Monsieur, your most obedient and humble servant.

1. During the siege of Paris by the armies of Condé.

2. Élisabeth Turgis, deceased in October 1648.

3. Jeanne-Baptiste, the elder, deceased in December 1648.

4. Salomé, deceased in November 1647.

5. Renée from Angers, deceased in December 1648.

6. Marie Despinal, deceased in May 1646.

7. Élisabeth Martin, deceased at the end of the year 1648.

8. Madeleine Mongert, also deceased at the end of the year 1648.

L.433 - (TO SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE)¹

at Nantes

May 22 (1649)

My very dear Sister,

Yesterday we sent you three of our sisters.² Please do not wait to send Sister Henriette³ and Sister Marie Thilouse⁴ to Richelieu, as Monsieur Vincent ordered.⁵ There, they shall await their new assignment from him. I beg you not to let them know of this until the night before they are to leave. Please ask Monsieur des Jonchères and Mademoiselle de La Carisière to persuade your administrators to accept this change, and follow their orders in this matter. We did not give our sisters any money for the trip, believing that the administrators would defray the cost. I assure you that the journey to Nantes is quite an expense for us. Nevertheless, if they do not wish to defray the cost, borrow some money from them and promise them that it will be repaid by us here. The journey is not long, so give them only what is necessary. If the gentlemen wish to contribute money for the expenses of the sisters sent there, accept it from them and send it with the sisters. We sent you a girl who is to be sent back to Saint-Méen. Ask Mademoiselle de La Carisière to help you to find a good chaperon for her. Our sisters have some money for her trip.

I expect much from the establishment at Nantes since persecutions are one of the signs of the value of a work. All three of the sisters we have sent to you have excellent dispositions, and they are deeply attached to their vocation. I hope that they will be a great help to you in carrying out the most holy will of God.

I beg you, my dear Sister, to tell Sister Jeanne⁶ and the others not to speak of the past. This only discourages some of the sisters. We should reflect upon all that has happened only to praise God for having saved from shipwreck those who remained steadfast, and to recognize the occasions that He has given us to suffer for His love. I beg Him with all my heart to take complete possession of all that we are on this holy feast day.⁷ Pray to God for the entire Company, which His goodness allows

1. An unaddressed letter. The content permits one to ascertain that it was a question of Jeanne Lepintre, Sister Servant in Nantes.
2. Marie Noret, Renée Delacroix and Catherine Baucher.
3. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76.
4. Marie Thilouse, see Letter 161.
5. In his letter of April 28, 1649 to Louise de Marillac, Monsieur Vincent deemed the departure of Marie and Henriette necessary (Coste III, 432).
6. Jeanne de Saint-Albin, see Letter 201.
7. Louise de Marillac wrote on Pentecost Sunday, May 22, 1649.

to be tried from time to time by various forces, that we may profit from such trials. I beg you to make a novena in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament for our needs, and pray for a number of persons who have requested our prayers and to whom we are most indebted.

I embrace all our sisters most affectionately and am to them and to you in His most holy love, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

L.248 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Nantes

June 1 (1649)

My very dear Sister,

I saw your letter and noticed the advice you requested of Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux regarding your incertitude. Remember that you can never be wrong in following the orders of our Most Honored Father. Be firm and constant in this, and never be persuaded to the contrary by the lure of self-satisfaction. You did not let me know to whom you had given your Rules, and this prevented them from being shown to the Bishop of Nantes, who had already once before been to see our sisters' quarters and found fault with them. However, it was not because of their way of life or the manner in which our establishment was run. This he knew of because his Vicar General had been fully informed.

I am truly upset for not having written to the administrators before the arrival of our sisters.¹ I felt better that they had a short stopover at Ponts-de-Cé. I believe the girl from Saint-Méen² has already been sent back. If not, I ask that she be a burden to no one. If she does not have enough money, borrow some and we will pay it back here or elsewhere.

Remember me to all our sisters and tell them always to remember the advice of Monsieur Vincent especially forbearance and cordiality so as to honor the unity and the diversity of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. I am in Their love, my dear Sister, your very humble and obedient servant.

1. Arrival of Marie Noret, Renée Delacroix and Catherine Baucher.

2. See Letter 433.

L.250 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

*Sister Servant of the Daughters of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor
at the Hospital of Saint-René at Nantes*

June 15 (1649)

My very dear Sister,

I deeply sympathize with your troubles, but because Monsieur Vincent¹ has just arrived and is weighed down by more business and difficulty than you can imagine, he has not yet been able to turn his attention to this matter. As soon as time and business allow him, he will give you instructions. Of this you can rest assured; and I am in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sister, your very humble and loving sister and servant.

P.S. I did not think I would be able to write this note. In the name of God, my very dear Sisters, work at being at peace in the midst of your troubles and concerns. Await with total submission the order and guidance of Divine Providence. One day we will both praise God for this persecution. True, you may be sent back, but please believe that nothing happens except for our good. Do you not know that God draws His glory from acts of contempt?

Please extend my very humble greetings to Monsieur de la Thomassière.² I had the honor of writing to him last week. In speaking to him of your troubles, I mentioned something which I did not explain well enough.

When I let him know that we would approve your dismissal, I told him that you would be justified in leaving and that you had but to shake the dust from your shoes. What I meant was that, since you were taking nothing from the hospital, your leaving would only be a proof to those who had accused you of wrongdoing that they were certainly mistaken. I beg God with all my heart to forgive them and to bestow His holy blessings upon them. Please be sure to deliver this message to this good gentleman. Good day, Sisters. Please greet Monsieur d'Annemont³ since he is in Nantes.

1. Monsieur Vincent returned to Paris on June 13, 1649.

2. Monsieur de la Thomassière, a hospital administrator.

3. Monsieur d'Annemont, a priest, see Letter 173.

L.251 - (TO SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST)¹

at Saint-Denis

June 18 (1649)

My very dear Sister,

I praise God with all my heart at seeing you restored to health, and I beg Him to increase it for His glory.

For reasons which I will explain to you, I would ask you to refrain from speaking of the faults of those over whom you exercise authority. Also be sure that our sisters are very exact when they spend money and that they keep record of it. When soup is made, three-quarters of a pound of meat, at most, may be added for each patient and sister as well. However, the sisters' soup is usually made separately since it is not reasonable for them to eat that of the patients, unless they are sick themselves. I would ask you to be sure to wash the feet of the sick as they enter, to wash their linens and to treat them with gentleness and charity. Your obligations are to provide the sick their medications and food at the correct times and to see to it that our sisters are exact in following their Rule.

Monsieur Vincent told me wonderful things about Sister Cécile,² and he spoke of the exactitude of our sisters. I hope our good God will bestow the same grace upon you once you are fully restored to health. I am in the love of His Son, my dear Sister, your most obedient sister and servant.

L.176 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

(June 1649)

Monsieur,

We owe you so much that I do not know how to express my gratitude for it all. I praise God for the consolation which in His goodness He allowed you to give to our sisters in Nantes.³ I am too rushed at the moment to speak to you of them. I only have time to tell you that I passed on to Monsieur Vincent the next-to-last letter I received from you. He asked me to tell you that he was most ashamed for not having written

1. Barbe Angiboust was at the Saint-Denis Hospital from 1649 to 1651.

2. Cécile Angiboust, whom Monsieur Vincent saw on his way to Angers in April.

3. The welcoming of three sisters who went to Nantes.

to you. Because he was afraid that business would not allow him the time to write, he asked me to tell you that, in view of the graces and blessings which God bestows on your holy undertakings, he finds it most appropriate that you apply for the Archdiaconate,¹ remembering that God will know where to find you when He needs you elsewhere. Monsieur, you know quite well his thoughts on this.

As for your nephew's slight disappointment, Monsieur Vincent feels that, with the goodness you always display, you should allow him more time to see whether the holder of the benefice might deal with him, informing your relatives of your procedure. After this time it seems that you will be able to act quite freely.

Monsieur Vincent also told me, Monsieur, that he gives you this advice reluctantly because he wants you to know that he finds consolation in having you in this area.

As for sending back² the sisters from Angers, we await your advice in the matter. I had asked you for this some time ago. I am greatly ashamed once again for not being able to write to Monsieur Ratier³ at this time. I hope that his goodness will excuse me, and that you will believe me always in the love of Jesus Crucified, Monsieur, your most obedient and humble servant.

L.481 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

at Angers

June 29 (1649)

Monsieur,

I praise God with all my heart that your fever is a simple one, and I hope that you are now over it. I also hope that the country air will help you to recover your usual good health. I have to tell you, Monsieur, that your illness had me a bit worried.

I had the honor of writing to the administrators to thank them for their kindness in receiving our sisters,⁴ and for helping them with their needs. It never occurred to me that they would pass through Angers; otherwise, I certainly would have written to them. I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, to place our sisters as you judge best. However, I thought that

1. Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux wished to obtain an archdeaconry for his nephew, the future Bishop of Saintes.

2. See Letter 481.

3. Monsieur Ratier, see Letter 71.

4. The three sisters going to Nantes, see Letter 248.

our Sister Madeleine¹ was one of the best, and that if some change had to be made that you would choose Sister Jeanne from Loudun² or another, whose name I have forgotten, whom Monsieur Ratier seems to have proposed for a change. If you feel Sister Claude³ is doing well, please place her in whatever duty you consider appropriate. As for Richelieu, it will be easy for us to send and recall those whom we judge suitable for the work there in the event that there is need to train other sisters. I do not know where to look for someone to assist Sister Cécile,⁴ who is already quite ill.

I humbly thank you, Monsieur, for the advice⁵ your Charity gave us for our sister of Nantes. I believe that it will be in keeping with the recommendation of Monsieur Vincent. I had already written to Monsieur de la Thomassière⁶ that it would be a great benefit for us if it were followed.

I greatly fear that our good Sister Jeanne⁷ spoke of the vows in a way which does not make it clear that they are something other than what is professed by the devout laity. Again let me say that they are not the same, for the laity usually pronounce them before their confessor. We must honor the plans of God and bless Him constantly. I believe that Monsieur Vincent will write to Nantes next week. He told me that he would decide tomorrow what will be done.

Please, Monsieur, let me know if in this first article of the Rule of our sisters there is anything which indicates a regular community and is different from the Rule of Angers. This was never my intention; on the contrary, I met with the Vicar General two or three times to explain to him that we were just a secular family and that because we were bound together by the Confraternity of Charity, we had Monsieur Vincent, as General of these Confraternities, for our Director. Once he understood our practices he then explained our type of establishment to the Bishop of Nantes who approved it so wholeheartedly that he signed his name along with the administrators of the city.

I believe, Monsieur, that the return of Sister Renée Priot will have greatly dampened the enthusiasm of any candidates wishing to join us. Great courage and steadfastness are essential in order to persevere here because we are bound only by obedience and are often exposed to the danger of discouragement in various circumstances. It is more than a little disheartening for us to spend so much time and so many years in

1. Madeleine Bécu, see Letter 228.

2. Monsieur Vincent proposed sending her to Richelieu (Coste III, 425).

3. Claude Chantereau, see Letter 421.

4. Cécile Angiboust would have Élisabeth Brocard as assistant.

5. See Letter 248.

6. Monsieur de la Thomassière, hospital administrator in Nantes.

7. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 248.

testing and forming our sisters only to have them taken from us by weakness. So long as God is glorified by it, nothing else matters. It is this which leads me humbly to beg you, for the love of God, to help us, by your holy sacrifices and prayers, to be faithful to His holy will in which I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and humble daughter and servant.

P.S. We forwarded the letter of the penitent woman and will try to get a response to send to her. The complete conversion of sinners is most difficult, and the almighty power of God must intervene.

L.252 - TO MY DEAR SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT¹

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Montreuil

July 23 (1649)

My very dear Sister,

I was overjoyed by the return of Marie Gallois² who brought us news of you and of Sister Marie.³ I praise God that it is good news, and I beg His goodness to preserve the health He has given you so that you may serve Him in the person of the poor. I am dismayed that I cannot send you one of our sisters at this time. I showed your letter to Monsieur Vincent who is of the opinion that you should get someone there, as you suggest, if you need help immediately. If you are able to come here, we could then decide together the best thing to do.

The Princess⁴ did us a considerable honor by remembering us. When you see her, Sister, assure her of my most humble respect and service. I beg God with all my heart to grant her a safe delivery. I would also ask you to greet Mademoiselle de Mounille⁵ for me. I am deeply touched by the kindness she extends to you.

It is true, my dear Sister, that the absence of Monsieur Vincent⁶ was extremely painful for us because we feared the dangers he might encounter. However, such was the holy will of God. May His holy name be eternally blessed for it and for all the graces which He has bestowed upon our entire company in His goodness, during these times of trouble. We could not thank Him enough for this if we did so for the rest of our lives. I beg you and Sister Marie to help us to fulfill these obligations.

1. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.

2. Marie Gallois, see Letter 217.

3. Marie Lullen, see Letter 182.

4. The Princess d'Harcourt lived in Montreuil-sur-Mer.

5. Lady of Charity of Montreuil-sur-Mer.

6. Monsieur Vincent was absent from Paris from January 14 to July 13, 1649.

I just received your letter brought by the son of your shoemaker, whom we shall serve in any way we can. I am glad, my dear Sister, that you let me know that you had given the two books to Marie Gallois. As soon as she arrived, we gave Sister Hellot the one that you had sent her. Poor Marie arrived safely, by the grace of God. I am rather upset that you were not able to keep her son at the hospital since the Count¹ had placed him there. If you only knew how incredibly difficult it is to place someone now in Paris. It seems as though the war has been here a long time and that everyone has grown poor from it. I assure you, Sister, that at the beginning of the wars it seemed that the parishes would be obliged to send all our sisters back. Nonetheless, Divine Providence saw to it that alms were given for the sick and bashful poor in amounts for which no one had dared hope. It seemed that the Lady Officers and others were more concerned about finding wheat for their poor than for themselves. May God be praised for this!

I spoke to Monsieur Vincent about the matter you mentioned concerning the Prince and Princess d'Harcourt. Assure them that he is still willing to carry out for them the wish of the deceased Count de Lannoy² and that he will rethink the matter anew. As for me, my dear Sister, I beg you to believe that I will urge him on in this matter, hoping that God will be glorified by it.

In the love of God and of His Son Jesus Crucified I am, my dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

P.S. All our sisters greet you very cordially. Our dear sister went to God, and another of our sisters is very ill; you do not know her.

L.252B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Saturday [August 1649]

Monsieur,

The proposal made by the Duchess³ to have the children fed with goat's milk makes me think of another means which, if it works, would allow them to be fed for an écu. However, we would have to try out the idea before presenting it to them, when it pleases your Charity. I will tell you my idea later; it would be rather long to write out.

I beg you most humbly, my Most Honored Father, to remember the request I made to you yesterday and to be so kind as to let me know if

1. The Count de Lannoy, see Letter 128.

2. The Count de Lannoy, see Letter 128.

3. The Duchess d'Aiguillon, see Letter 89.

you will grant Sister Françoise,¹ the gardener, what she asked of you yesterday. Also please offer to God at the holy altar the renewal of several other sisters and give us your holy blessing. I am, my Most Honored Father, your most obedient and grateful daughter and servant.

L.253 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at the Hospital at Nantes

August 18 (1649)

My very dear Sister,

I praise God with all my heart for having restored your health. I must tell you that I was so sorry for you, dear Sister, suffering as you were from such a long illness in addition to your other troubles. The numerous reasons we have to hope that God will draw His glory from these difficulties should greatly console you. Monsieur Vincent praises God for this with all his heart and reminds you that one must always await the direction of Divine Providence to reconcile the differences that have arisen. If you are sent back,² my dear Sisters, it is only just that you be given the funds for your trip. If we are compelled to withdraw you, Monsieur Vincent has asked Monsieur des Jonchères to give you what you need. However, my dear Sister, it is still necessary for you to send us word before your departure because we are being asked for sisters for that area.

I beg you, my dear Sister, to assure all our sisters that Monsieur Vincent truly praises their generosity and fidelity to God in their vocation. How just it is, my dear Sisters, not to allow yourselves to be carried off in all directions!

I saw Monsieur de . . . , one of the Fathers of the Poor of last year and he was very well disposed toward you. If God permits you to remain there, we shall carry out the recommendations he judges necessary. He spoke to me about the seasoning of your soup. I believe you should not hesitate to add some cloves to it since it is the custom of the region. Likewise, Sister, since the Fathers of the Poor would like it done, please prepare consommés for the gravely ill who need them. You should also go to the trouble of preparing tasty stews and seasonings for the convalescing patients. This costs no more and they regain their strength

1. Françoise Fanchon, see Letter 595.

2. The difficulties resumed in Nantes. The administrators spoke of dismissing the sisters, see Letter 250.

much more quickly. Sometimes it only takes a little to satisfy the most difficult.

Please greet good Monsieur Don Jean¹ for me. All our sisters also send their greetings to you. Our little Sister Marguerite² from Liancourt was buried on the feast of Saint Roch; I would ask all our sisters to receive Holy Communion for her. Our good King arrives in Paris today and there is joy in the hearts of all. Pray God for the Church and for all of France, and believe me in His most holy love, my dear Sister, your most obedient and humble sister and servant.

P.S. I beg you to extend our most humble and respectful greetings to Monsieur des Jonchères,³ Monsieur d'Annemont,⁴ Monsieur de la Truchandière, and to all our good friends, including the Ladies.

L.255 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

August 30 [1649]

Monsieur and Most Honored Father,

I suspected that I would have to come here,⁵ but I will only be able to give you an account when I have the honor of seeing you. Monsieur de la Hode, chaplain at Chantilly, came to see me to give me some advice. It seems that the entire family is being attacked from all sides; I do not know what God is telling us by this. I most humbly beg your Charity to be so good as to let me know if I should go to Chantilly to deal with the situation; I believe it might be necessary.

I understand that Madame de Romilly⁶ has learned that the family of Monsieur Portier, who lives across from Saint-Paul's, is everything we could desire. She should be speaking to you for them. However, I most humbly beg you, my dear Father, not to speak to her about it, unless she brings it up to you, because the people who spoke to my son about this⁷ told him that the parents were happy with the property. It is also wiser on such occasions not to declare too openly what one has because it can be prejudicial should matters not materialize.

The hopes for the future, whether in property or employments, are considerable. It is not that I have the intention or the will to deceive

1. Don Jean Morisse, see Letter 164.

2. Marguerite from Fismes, who was in Liancourt.

3. Monsieur des Jonchères, see Letter 147.

4. Monsieur d'Annemont, see Letter 173.

5. Louise de Marillac arrived at Liancourt on Saturday, August 28.

6. Madame de Romilly, see Letter 191.

7. It was a question of marriage plans for Michel Le Gras.

anyone, God forbid, but it seems to me that the expenditures in the past which served to make a man employable were considerable. Then there is his inclination not to squander what he has but to work to acquire more, which I hope he will succeed in doing once he is settled. I beg your Charity most humbly to present this matter as well as the needs of our Company to our good God so as to draw upon them His graces and blessings. Please give me your blessing for His love in which I am, my Most Honored Father, your most obedient servant and most grateful daughter.

L.256 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

To be given to Sister Julienne Loret

[August 1649]

My very dear Sister,

I believe that you must have received my letters today. I also wrote to Monsieur Vincent, but I had not yet received your deplorable letter. We cannot be put off guard in this matter. It is much too important. Ask Monsieur Vincent for an appointment to see him but let him know that it is an urgent matter. Then tell him everything. Even speak to him about the conduct of Monsieur Provost. It can only be that the devil has great plans for the loss of these souls. Be especially careful that Sister Anne-Marie does not go out. Express to Monsieur Vincent the regrets of her aunt, and tell him that I most humbly beg him to see the benefit in confining this girl. We could do this if we had a secure room. However, I do not see anything else we can do except to place her at Sainte-Marie as if she were in retreat. Since she is the niece of one of their religious, they will not refuse her this charity. I foresee great difficulties if she goes out. If we resort to some stringent means to prevent her, it could possibly serve to retard the development of this custom so that weak spirits within our Company will not continue it. I foresee our total ruin if an end is not put to it. We certainly deserve it, and I, most of all, because of my failings and infidelities. Explain everything to Monsieur Vincent, telling him of the danger that exists if people see young girls leave the house with such freedom. This will be a source of scandal for everyone and even those who are well-balanced will be offended. Do all that you can promptly, and pray to God for me. I am in His holy love, my dear Sister, your most obedient sister and servant.

P.S. I am astonished at the freedom this sister had to take all the trips about which you have spoken. In the name of God, dear Sister, be vigilant

concerning all that happens. I do not know if you took away her keys; it is necessary, but do so without appearing not to trust her.

L.256B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[August 1649]

Monsieur,

Since writing this letter,¹ I thought that it would be better to address it to you because of the prompt assistance required in this matter. For that reason I am sending you the letter for Sister Julienne who will explain everything to you. Monsieur Lambert knows about it, and it was only through an attachment to confessors that all the evil arose. It is truly necessary to think of what might be done in order to avoid these unfortunate incidents. It displeases me greatly to cause you so much worry by my poor leadership. If you recall, I already spoke to your Charity of this poor young sister,² and you suggested that she be sent back. However, she is determined not to return, and she was advised by Renée to allow herself to be put into the coach and then to get off shortly after having been left alone. These are daring spirits, capable of much evil. That is why they are to be pitied. My thought is that this misfortune befalls them because of their boldness in receiving the sacraments with these bad dispositions. God have mercy on us, and bestow on me the grace to be faithful.

L.218 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Montreuil

Friday, September 3 (1649)

My very dear Sister,

I arrived Saturday³ in Liancourt where I found your dear news. I praise God with all my heart for the health He has given to the Princess d'Harcourt,⁴ and I beg Him that this may be for His glory and the

1. Letter written on the back of the preceding.

2. Anne-Marie, see Letter 256.

3. Saturday, August 28.

4. The Princess d'Harcourt had just given birth, see Letter 252.

sanctification of this beautiful soul, so that she may truly be the heiress of her virtuous father and mother.

I would have been just as embarrassed as you were, my dear Sister, had I been in your place, and I believe that the absolute order issued to us takes away any fault there might have been. I will speak to Monsieur Vincent about it on my return, if God gives me the grace, so that the judgment he passes on it may benefit us in the future.

I desire as much as ever to contribute to the good work begun in the hospital. However, we must wait and see what God wishes of us in this matter through the direction of superiors, and we must remain at peace while we wait.

Little Anne Varon¹ gives us little hope that she will be suited to the Company. In the event she has to be dismissed, see if you might send her back home rather than have her serve in Paris, where there are more girls lost than ever. We will continue to do all we can for her.

Please extend my greetings to the good Mother,² to Sister Marie³ and to the entire community. In the name of God, my dear Sisters, amidst the applause you receive because of your good work there, I beg you not to forget the fidelity you owe to God and the care you must take in working toward your perfection, acting only with purity of intention and with the desire to follow the example of Jesus Crucified. In His love I am, my dear Sisters, your most obedient and humble servant.

P.S. Please convey my greetings to Mademoiselle de Mounille,⁴ and assure her of my most humble service.

L.264 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

at Angers

November 3, 1649

Monsieur,

I refrained from writing to you for quite a while because I believed you to be out in the country. Knowing your holy duties, I feared being a bother to you. I most humbly beg your forgiveness for this.

The Bishop of Angers has not said anything about the holy relic of Saint Maurice,⁵ which is still in the state in which you ordered it to be put.

-
1. Anne Varon, see Letter 260.
 2. Mademoiselle de Mounille, a Lady of Charity.
 3. Marie Lullen, see Letter 182.
 4. Mademoiselle de Mounille, a Lady of Charity.
 5. See Letter 265.

Our sisters have informed me that the administrators wish to have more of our sisters sent. However, they themselves have let us know nothing of this. This leads me to ask you most humbly, Monsieur, to be so good as to find out for yourself the origin of this proposal. I would also ask you, if you think it appropriate, to inform these gentlemen that they should write to Monsieur Vincent about the matter.

I beg God to keep you in perfect health for His glory and for the good of souls. I am with the respect and submission which I owe you in His holy love, Monsieur, your most obedient and very humble daughter and servant.

L.263 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[November 1649]

My Most Honored Father,

I am too insistent, but we are truly at the point where we need help without delay, or else we must drop everything. Yesterday it was necessary to spend all the money we had for current expenses, about 15 or 20 pounds, to have wheat for the children at Bicêtre. Then we had to borrow to get four bushels. We have no source of income for the coming month.

There are 12 or 13 children here, and there are not enough diapers to change them. Please, it is essential for the assembly of Ladies to do something about this matter tomorrow such as pass a resolution to collect alms in the parishes every Sunday, place small collection boxes in some prominent place in the churches, ask the Parish Priests and preachers to recommend this act of charity, and take up a collection at Court, as had been suggested. I believe that if someone went to speak to the Princess¹ about these extreme needs that she would give something. It is pitiful that the Ladies go to so little trouble. Either they must believe that we have enough to support the children, or they want to force us to abandon everything. For these reasons I think that they have resolved to do nothing at all. Please let us know if we should send notices for the assembly, and if you think it is wise for us to inform Madame de Shomberg² and Madame de Verthamont³ of it.

-
1. Charlotte de Montmorency, the Princess de Condé, of the royal family.
 2. Madame de Shomberg (1616-1691), born Marie de Hautefort, Madame de Liancourt's sister-in-law. Her husband, the Field Marshal of France, took part in La Fronde.
 3. Madame de Verthamont, see Letter 60.

As for the rest of what I had to tell you, it would be too long. It would be better to tell you about it tomorrow if I have the honor of seeing you. I am truly in need of personal assistance from God, for I see only misery and affliction in all that touches me. God be blessed for it! I am content to let you know my needs, for there is no other hope of assistance and consolation than you, my Most Honored Father, of whom Divine Providence wished that I be your most obedient daughter and most grateful servant.

P.S. Please let us know if the conference¹ will indeed treat of the subject you gave me—that of my complaint about the sisters who ask to be changed.

I fear you are going to the country.

L.266 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[November 1649]

My Most Honored Father,

I am very distressed at being so insistent, but the impossibility of being able to continue receiving little children is too pressing. Our two wet-nurses now have seven infants who will not drink from a bottle, and we have no money to place them with someone else; nor do we have a supply of sheets or linens nor the hope of being able to borrow any more. Show us your charity, my Most Honored Father, and let us know whether we can, in conscience, see them placed in a situation where they may die. The Ladies have made no effort to help us, and I am sure that they believe that we are profiting from their expenditures. This is actually contrary to the truth, because we only retained 100 pounds from the money they allocated to us for the maintenance of the wet-nurses. I know of only one way to assist all those who suffer in this work, and that is for us, in the name of our Company, to present a request to the Chief Justice to relieve us of our responsibility of receiving the children and to have them received by whomever he deems fit. However, the Ladies would have to support this plan so that no one would be shocked by it. Otherwise, it seems to me that we are in continual mortal sin.

Four children were brought in yesterday. Besides the seven who are nursing, there are three who have been weaned. All of the new ones are foundlings, and one of them is from the prison. If it is possible, they should be nursed again. If we could deal with this difficulty without

1. The conference of November 28 would be on the love of work.

making you part of it, I would most gladly do so. However, our helplessness does not permit it. These good Ladies are not doing what they can. Not one of them has sent anything, nor has anything been received from those of the Company because the majority have paid their dues in advance.

I beg God to show us mercy. I am beginning to fear that all this misery is due to the fact that I am what I am, my Most Honored Father, your most obedient and most grateful daughter.

P.S. I think that it is necessary to hold a General Assembly. The collation for the patients at the Hôtel-Dieu is also to cease.

L.352 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CLAUDE BRIGIDE¹

at Chantilly

(End of 1649)

My very dear Sister,

I am deeply distressed at having left you alone for so long;² I ask your pardon. You lost nothing by waiting, because I am sending Sister Geneviève³ who has served the sick poor of Saint-Leu for a long time. I hope that God will give her the graces she will need to accomplish what He will ask of her there. I especially beg you, for the love of God, my very dear Sisters, to show great gentleness to the poor, and to work with great care for their salvation, informing them of the necessity of following God's commandments and His holy will and then showing them how to do so. I would ask both of you to exhibit great reserve and modesty. Each of you should remember to practice your Rule, especially mutual support. Instruct your little schoolgirls with great gentleness; however, do not allow them to make mistakes without correcting them.

I beg you, Sister, to teach our sister how to let blood. Especially teach her well the dangers involved with the arteries, nerves and other areas. Remember, if you think you have opened an artery, to draw a great quantity of blood and to put a coin in the compress in order to make the ligature. Once our sister has been well instructed, you will be able to come here to visit. Send that good girl back to Liancourt by some safe means.

1. Claude Brigide, see Letter 114.

2. Marie Prévost was called back to Paris around September 1649.

3. Geneviève Doinel was in the Company in 1646. She served the poor in the parish of Saint-Leu then came to Chantilly in 1649. In 1650, she was sent to Hennebont, where she lived until 1653. She did not know how to write and put an "x" on the Act of Establishment of the Company on August 8, 1655. She returned to Chantilly in 1656.

Our sister will tell you all the news of the Company, which I recommend to you before God. I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

L.293 - TO SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE¹

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at the Hôtel-Dieu at Nantes

November 21 (1649)

My very dear Sister,

I was truly happy to have news of your dear selves and especially that Sister Jeanne de Saint-Albin² went to the trouble of writing to me. I thank her with all my heart. If I were not so busy, I would have allowed myself the pleasure of writing to her by return mail. I beg all our infirm sisters to encourage one another in their weakness and to view themselves as being in the state which God wishes of them. Since they are doing God's will, they are honoring Him in the highest manner possible. Tell Sister Henriette³ that her brother and her nephew, the youngest one, are doing splendidly, especially in their practice of total detachment. Sister Perrette⁴ is deeply edified by them, and they both recommend themselves to her prayers.

We would really like you to send us a good supply of codfish, one which can be transported and kept easily. However, this should be done through Mademoiselle de La Carisière.⁵ Tell her that I humbly request this, and ask her to give us the address where we can send the payment for the codfish and its shipment. Express my regrets for not writing to her. Do likewise to all those to whom I should write. Give our regards to Don Jean,⁶ to the others and especially to our dear sisters. I am to them and to you in the love of Our Lord, your very humble sister and servant.

1. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64.

2. Jeanne de Saint-Albin, see Letter 201.

3. Henriette Gesseau did not leave Nantes as was anticipated, see Letter 433.

4. Perrette Chefdeville, see Letter 526.

5. Mademoiselle de la Carsière, a lady of Nantes, see Letter 147.

6. Don Jean Morisse, see Letter 164.

L.268 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[November 1649]

My Most Honored Father,

I humbly beg you to give me 15 minutes sometime tomorrow so that I can regain what I apparently lost yesterday through the intervention of Divine Providence. I do not know whether it is fear or my pride which is at fault for always making me reluctant to speak of myself.

Enclosed is the response of Madame de Romilly.¹

I beg you to take the trouble to let me know whether I should send your letter to the President, Madame de Lamoignon,² even though the Princess³ is not coming. Also, would it be appropriate to ask Madame de Brienne,⁴ who has returned to the city?

Here is a short memorandum I drew up so that you could undertake to speak of these matters at the assembly, if you think it appropriate. Please let us know where the assembly will be held so that we can tell Mademoiselle de Lamoignon.

Please let us know also if we should tell our sisters at Serqueux to send us the girl they mentioned to us. Enclosed also is a letter from the administrators of Gien.⁵ What should we tell them? Is the Duchess de Ventadour⁶ no longer urging the matter?

Another of our sisters left yesterday, with her habit, without saying a word. She is one from Saint-Cloud. What does it mean? Are not stern measures necessary for some of them so that this practice will cease? Once before, this sister asked to leave, and we granted her permission, and she stayed on of her free will. It seems to me that God wishes either to strengthen or destroy us through these episodes. Please think this matter over and let me know in all honesty if I am the Jonah who must be removed. I am God's, to be used as He desires, and I am, Monsieur, your most obedient sister and most grateful daughter.

1. Regarding marriage plans for Michel Le Gras, see Letter 255.

2. Madame de Lamoignon, see Letter 77.

3. The Princess de Condé, see Letter 263.

4. Madame de Brienne, see Letter 86.

5. Gien, a small town on the banks of the Loire.

6. Madame, the Duchess de Ventadour, born Marie de la Guiche, married in 1645, widowed in 1649, a very devout Lady of Charity. She requested Daughters of Charity for Sainte-Marie-du-Mont in Normandy. In 1658, she requested some for Ussel, which belonged to the Ventadour dukedom. As Louise de Marillac's friend, she was present at the time of her death. Madame de Ventadour died in her Sainte-Marie-du-Mont château in 1701.

L.268B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Wednesday (November 1649)

Monsieur,

I sent your note which was given to Madame de Lamoignon¹ since Mademoiselle was not there. Madame told me that the date of the assembly depended on you, and that Mademoiselle Viole² had earnestly desired it to be on Friday. I am, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and servant.

L.212 - TO HIS LORDSHIP, CHANCELLOR SÉGUIER³

(c. 1649)

My Lord,

The respect I owe your Lordship led me to seek out occasions to collect, through persons of rank, the charity you promised the poor foundlings while you were at Saint-Germain. However, my Lord, seeing everything lacking, I am taking the liberty of writing to you since I will not have the honor of coming to speak to you myself of the plight of 100 of these poor little children. Among all their needs, it is the lack of bread for this festive season which pulls at my heart so strongly that I would consider myself remiss if any consideration prevented me from having recourse to your Lordship, who has on so many other occasions truly appeared a champion of the poor. Thus, permit me the great boldness of saying that I am, with all submission and respect, in the love of God for whom you act, my Lord, your most obedient and humble servant.

1. Madame de Lamoignon, see Letter 77.

2. Mademoiselle Viole, see Letter 91.

3. Chancellor Séguier, see Letter 60.

L.273 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[December 1649]

Monsieur,

I believe that your Charity will remember that I spoke to you about that good girl from Saint-Cloud. Enclosed is a letter for her which I would ask you please to read. Divine Providence has not allowed her to sell her inheritance, but she is renting it to her sister who is well-off and who is paying her 30 écus a year. Our sisters are fond of her and find no inconvenience in taking her in, provided that your Charity approves.

We would really like to know if the poor wet-nurses will be paid something at this holiday time. Also, will the children who are still nursing and who are being brought back for lack of payment, be sent back to the nurses with the money given for the care of the new foundlings? If we get some money, we will do all we can to have them taken back by the nurses. However, some of them have already been left with us.

We truly need God's guidance in the matter involving my son¹ who, I believe, will allow himself the honor of speaking to you about it, since he has taken the liberty of staying with you tonight so as to avoid the unfortunate encounter. He will tell you of the trying incidents involved in this matter which, it seems to me, he has always submitted to the will of God, in which I have the honor of being, Monsieur, your most obedient and most grateful daughter and servant.

L.272B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[December 1649]

Monsieur,

Here is a letter from Mademoiselle de Villenant in which you will see what I learned about the matter. What bothers me is the difficulty experienced by widows in being relieved of their duties after the death of their husbands. We are having trouble finding the money we need so as to be accepted and to pay the fees to the necessary parties. Moreover, we have not been able to obtain the gift I was told would be given to me. Besides that, the good woman who is handling the matter told me today that we had to resolve the status of the person involved in

1. See the following letters.

negotiations before us who had returned to this village. She said that they will be glad if he returns here to find matters in the hands of another. It makes me a bit fearful that they plan to break off negotiations with us. I will no longer know what to say if that occurs.

All the difficulties mentioned above have arisen only because of my son's lack of experience. However, he needs to be spurred on in order to work deliberately at setting himself up on his own. He is a bit lazy, as I am, and we need to be pushed before we act either by necessity or by bursts of enthusiasms which lead us to undertake even some rather difficult things.

After examining the articles, Monsieur de Marillac¹ saw that they were wanting in some respects; nevertheless, he did not counsel me to break with it because, though what he counselled me to ask for was not granted, he found great advantages for us in this matter.

If your Charity will be in the area Saturday morning, I urge you, most humbly to let me know. That should be the day the uncle and daughter² are coming, and I think that we must settle everything. Your dear and good advice will help me greatly to make up my mind. I most humbly beg you to give me your advice in the name of Our Lord, through whom I am, Monsieur, your very humble daughter and most grateful servant.

L.274 - TO THE COUNT DE MAURE³

(December 1649)

Monsieur,

I was still hoping that I would find some way of having the honor of seeing you. Since I cannot, I am taking the liberty of writing to you to let you know how things are going in the matter⁴ concerning my son. I would like to say that the whole thing is a great affliction for me, but as a Christian I must embrace the scorn which normally accompanies poverty which is the only reason why our cause is not being advanced. To tell you the truth, Monsieur, I am beginning to share the feelings which human prudence is giving this fine girl.⁵ Knowing my son, and knowing the little I can give him, she feels that he could never hope for any acquisitions since, between them, they have only enough to maintain

1. Michel de Marillac, a deputy of Parliament and Michel Le Gras' cousin.

2. Gabrielle Le Clerc, Lord de Chennevières' daughter, Michel Le Gras' future spouse.

3. The Count de Maure, husband of Anne d'Attichy, Louise de Marillac's cousin.

4. See Letter 279.

5. Gabrielle Le Clerc, Michel Le Gras' future spouse.

a small family. She is afraid to risk this danger since she is aware that expenses usually come to those least able to support them, and in the event of death, poor orphans would be left. And even though people connected with the matter have given them reason to hope when hope seems lost, it seems, Monsieur, that they only believe what they see. If God had not filled your heart with charity, you would have reason to complain about my importunity. However, to whom could I pour out these troubles, which my exaggerated courage has made me keep hidden for so long, except to you, Monsieur, who are before God what you are, and who hold in my regard the place of those¹ whose conduct² has led me to embrace the life which has placed me in the situation in which I now find myself. Do not think that I am complaining by all this, God forbid! I would have been very happy had Divine Providence willed the success of their hopes and plans, and the prolongation of their lives. However, it did not turn out that way. May God be forever glorified for this and for the fact that since my widowhood, or at least for the past ten or twelve years, I have sought aid. Monsieur and Madame de Marillac³ and Monsieur's mother⁴ will attest to this. Please forgive me, Monsieur, for this bothersome letter which lets you know the trust I have in your great discretion. I am truly in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most obedient and very humble servant.

L.267 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[December 1649]

I most humbly beg your Charity to place our concerns before God. I found Monsieur and Madame de Marillac⁵ very willing to advance our plans. However the nun⁶ feels I should see Mademoiselle d'Atry⁷ in order to remind her of the services which the late Monsieur Le Gras⁸ rendered

1. "Ceux": it is clear that Mademoiselle was speaking of Monsieur and Madame d'Attichy. Monsieur Le Gras had been in charge of their financial interests and perhaps even the guardianship of their children, to his personal detriment.
2. Her marriage with Monsieur Le Gras, Queen Marie de Médicis' secretary, while at the time Monsieur d'Attichy was this same Queen's Minister of Finance.
3. Michel de Marillac and his wife, Jeanne Potier, see Letter 133 and 50.
4. Madame de Marillac, born Marie de Creil, wife of René, entered Carmel at the end of 1632 or at the beginning of the year 1633.
5. Michel Le Gras' cousins, see Letters 133 and 50.
6. Madame de Marillac, see above.
7. Marie-Angélique d'Atry, daughter of Geneviève d'Attichy, a nun at Port-Royal.
8. Antoine Le Gras, Louise de Marillac's husband.

to her late mother,¹ and to try to have her arrange something for my son as the Count de Maure² is doing. In view of this, I ask you to permit me to go to Port Royal with her daughter, who wishes to take me there either tomorrow or the day after.

I am really afraid that Madame de Herse³ has discouraged the Ladies from coming to the assembly by her suggestion that they bring money with them. I think, Monsieur, that she should make it clear that she is not speaking of money from their own purses, and that she wishes to obligate no one. The more I think about what we owe, the more I fear that the matter will be left in our hands alone. The nurses are starting to threaten us and are bringing the infants back, and the debts are accumulating so quickly that we have no hope of paying them. If that happens, it would be more detrimental to the Company throughout the countryside than if we had passed counterfeit money.

I am thinking about that good poor woman, the stout one. I believe she could be received now. If you wish me to speak about it with the Reverend Mother Prioress and Madame Le Vacher for you, I would be most willing to do so.

I did not have the time to see Monsieur des Bordes⁴ as I had planned. Monsieur de Marillac⁵ gave me some clarification on our most pressing business. If we were not being led in this matter by Divine Providence, I would be most apprehensive.

You know how greatly I need to obtain from God the means for drawing His grace upon me so that I may accomplish His will. It seems to me that accordingly I must place my will and powerlessness in your hands in order to offer all to Him. This I do, most particularly in the matter at hand, and also for the carrying out of all His holy plans for her who remains, by His grace, Monsieur, your most obedient servant and most grateful daughter.

1. Valence de Marillac, who married Octavien d'Attichy, died in 1617.

2. The Count de Maure, see Letter 274.

3. Madame de Herse, see Letter 126.

4. Monsieur des Bordes, see Letter 272.

5. Michel Le Gras' cousin, see Letter 133.

L.272 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

General of the Venerable Priests of the Mission

December 20 [1649]

Monsieur,

I am assured that the position belongs to those presently filling it and that it is impossible to replace them before their resignation.¹ Our business continues. I found the person of whom I spoke to you yesterday to be quite calm, and this morning he did what he should. I most humbly beg your Charity to continue to pray for him.

Mademoiselle de Villenant humbly requests the opportunity to speak with you before Thursday. Please let her know where she might have the honor of meeting you. If there is a way, please be good enough to let me know through our sister who is bringing this letter. It is an urgent matter of importance for the glory of God. I was truly upset at not having gotten to see Monsieur des Bordes;² the coachman was mistaken and did not know the road.³

Enclosed is the clarification of the doubt we had. In your goodness, I ask your Charity not to lose it and to honor me by believing me to be, Monsieur, your most obedient and most grateful daughter and servant.

L.365 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Nantes

(December 1649)

My very dear Sister,

I received two of your letters which were nearly identical, both on the same day. I assure you that it troubles me greatly that you are suffering; but why? I should be envious since you are suffering in the service of God.

I sincerely hope that all of you are without fault and that each of you is taking up the practice of true and solid humility, submission and gentleness. It seems that your duties are being encroached upon in violation of our contract. It would be wise to let Monsieur des Jonchères

1. Louise de Marillac was trying to find an honorable position for her son.

2. Monsieur des Bordes, deputy of one of the 13 Administrations of Finance, a friend of the de Marillac family.

3. Louise de Marillac returned from Port Royal, see Letter 267.

and others who appreciate your work with the poor know about this. However, to look for an all-out battle, to complain about it openly, to murmur about it among yourselves must be avoided because, except for your sister assistants, the other sisters must hear nothing which will disturb them. I would have already received orders from Monsieur Vincent concerning all your troubles, but he has been confined to his room for a week. I will not fail to do so as soon as I am able.

Poor Madame Marchais¹ asks for your prayers in her affliction. She was taken from her country-house and brought to Châteaudun by a man who had a relative at the Longue-Ville town hall and who married her there. However, she says that it was by force, and now there is a major lawsuit over the matter.

Your parents are well, thank God. Extend my greetings to your administrators, Mademoiselle de La Carisière and the other good Ladies we know. Believe me to be in the love of Our Lord Incarnate, my dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

1650

Establishment of the Daughters of Charity at Hennebont and Montmirail.

January 18: *Marriage of Michel Le Gras.*

October: *Birth of his daughter, Louise-Renée.*

L.275 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor of the Hospital at Nantes

January 13, 1650

My very dear Sister,

I truly share the pain that you and we are feeling at the loss of our good Sister Marie Arnou.² God, in His goodness, found her worthy and so He called her to be with Him in paradise. I assure you, my dear Sister, that this news surprised us greatly. I would truly like to know how Sister Marie Noret³ is coming along in her illness. We will do all we can to send

1. See Letter 275.

2. Marie Arnou, a native of Ennery, arrived in Nantes in November 1648 and died in the beginning of January 1650.

3. Marie Noret, arrived at the Hospital of Nantes in June 1649 and died towards the month